

What is claimed is:

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1. A method of responding to a request in a distributed system, said distributed system including a plurality of hosts, wherein each host is operable to respond to at least one type of request, the method comprising steps of:
receiving a multicasted message, said message including a request;
determining a type of said request; and
responding to said request based on said type of said request.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of designating a subset of said plurality of hosts for each type of request.
- 15 3. The method of claim 2, wherein said step of responding further comprises a step of a host of said plurality of hosts responding to said request in response to said host being included in a subset for said type of said request.
- 20 4. The method of claim 3, wherein said step of responding further comprises a step of determining whether responding to said request includes providing a state-changing response.
- 25 5. The method of claim 4, wherein said step of responding further comprises steps of:
generating multiple responses from multiple hosts in said subset for said type of said request;
transmitting said multiple responses to a client in response to said responding including a non-state-changing-response; and
synchronizing said multiple responses in response to said responding including a state-changing-response.
- 30 6. The method of claim 5, wherein said step of synchronizing further comprises a step of designating a synchronizing host operable to facilitate transmitting one of said multiple responses to said client.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said step of synchronizing further comprises steps of:
transmitting a message to each host in said subset for said type of said request, said
message indicating that a response has been transmitted to said client; and
deleting said request from a queue for each host receiving said message.

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8. The method of claim 7, wherein said type of request includes one of a meta data request
and a data request.

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9. A distributed system comprising:
a plurality of hosts, each host being included in a subset of hosts operable to respond to a
type of request; wherein each host is operable to receive a multicasted message including a
request, determine a type of said request, and respond to said request based on said type of said
request.

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10. The distributed system of claim 9, wherein multiple hosts in a subset for said type of said
request responds to said request.

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11. The distributed system of claim 10, wherein said multiple hosts in said subset for said
type of said request determines whether responding to said request includes providing a state-
changing response.

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12. The distributed system of claim 11, wherein said subset for said type of said request
includes a synchronization host, said synchronization host is operable to facilitate transmitting a
single response to a client in response to said multiple hosts in said subset generating a state-
changing response.

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13. The distributed system of claim 12, wherein said multiple hosts in said subset transmit a
response to said client in response to said multiple hosts in said subset generating a non-state-
changing response.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein said type of request includes one of a meta data request and a data request.

15. A computer readable medium on which is embedded a program, the program performing
5 a method of responding to a request in a distributed system, said distributed system including a plurality of hosts, wherein each host is operable to respond to at least one type of request, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a multicasted message, said message including a request;
determining a type of said request; and
10 responding to said request based on said type of said request.

16. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein said method further comprises a step of designating a subset of said plurality of hosts for each type of request.

15 17. The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein said step of responding further comprises a step of a host of said plurality of hosts responding to said request in response to said host being included in a subset for said type of said request.

18. The computer readable medium of claim 17, wherein said step of responding further
20 comprises a step of determining whether responding to said request includes providing a state-changing response.

19. The computer readable medium of claim 18, wherein said step of responding further comprises steps of:

25 generating multiple responses from multiple hosts in said subset for said type of said request;
transmitting said multiple responses to a client in response to said responding including a non-state-changing-response; and
30 synchronizing said multiple responses in response to said responding including a state-changing-response.

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20. The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein said type of request includes one of a meta data request and a data request.

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